

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PORT L 00255 181226Z
ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 IO-06 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 L-01

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6540

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT LOUIS 0255

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MP UG OAU XA

SUBJECT: RAMGOOLAM'S VIEWS ON IDI AMIN

1. IN A CONVERSATION WITH ME ON MARCH 17 PRIME MINISTER
RAMGOOLAM SAID THAT THE REASON NO AFRICAN LEADER CRITICIZES
IDI AMIN PUBLICLY IS THAT NOE OF THEM HAS A RECORD MUCH BETTER
THAN AMIN'S. HE SAID FEW OF THEM HAVE ANY BETTER CLAIMS TO
LEGITIMACY IN TERMS OF HOW THEY CAME TO POWER, AND THERE EXIST
ONLY THREE MULTI-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACIES ON THE ENTIRE
CONTINENT: SENEGAL, GAMBIA AND MAURITIUS. (I SUGGESTED
BOTSWANA, BUT HE SAID IT'S A ONE-PARTY STATE.) RAM SAID,
"YOU KNOW, THEY'RE ALL KILLERS, ALL OF THEM. THEY HAVE ALL KILLED
PEOPLE WHO OPPOSED THEIR RULE, SO HOW CAN THEY SPEAK OUT
AGAINST AMIN?"

2. WHEN I TOOK ISSUE WITH HIS BLANKET CONDEMNATION AND ARGUED
THAT THERE IS A LARGE DEGREE OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AMIN'S
SYSTEMATIC AND LARGE SCALE MASSACRES OF OPPONENTS, POTENTIAL,
REAL OR IMAGINED IN UGANDA, AND THE STIFLING OF OPPOSITION IN
SOME AFRICAN COUNTRIES, INCLUDING JAILING AND EXILING OF OPPONENTS,
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PAGE 02 PORT L 00255 181226Z

AND EVEN EXECUTIONS OF SOME, RAMGOOLAM WOULD NOT ADMIT THAT
ANYONE HAS CLEAN HANDS. HE SAID HE WAS THE FIRST AND PERHAPS
THE ONLY AFRICAN LEADER TO HAVE DENOUNCED AMIN, WHEN IN A UN
SPEECH HE COMPARED AMIN'S EXPLUSION OF UGANDAN ASIANS UNFAVORABLY
WITH THE WAY SOUTH AFRICA TREATS ITS ASIANS, AND HAD LABELLED
AMIN THE RACIST HE IS. I POINTED OUT THAT NYERERE AND KAUNDA
HAD PUBLICLY DENOUNCED AMIN'S REGIME FROM ITS VERY BEGINNING

IN 1971, PARTLY OUT OF THEIR FRIENDSHIP FOR MILTON OBOTE, AND THERE HAD BEEN SOME OTHER AFRICAN PERSONALITIES OTHER THAN CHIEFS OF STATE WHO HAD CRITICIZED AMIN. RAM SAID PERHAPS NYERERE DID NOT DESERVE HIS EPITHET OF "KILLER", BUT EVEN HE TOOK EXTREME MEASURES SUCH AS CONFISCATING PEOPLE'S HOUSES AND THEN MAKING THEM PAY RENT TO OCCUPY THEIR OWN PROPERTY.

3. FOREIGN MINISTER WALTER, WHO WAS PRESENT, PREDICTED THAT AMIN WOULD NOT LAST OUT THE YEAR, AS HE WOULD MOST LIKELY BE ASSASSINATED BY ONE OF HIS OWN BODYGUARDS. I REMARKED THAT PEOPLE HAVE BEEN PREDICTING AMIN'S IMMINENT DEMISE FOR MANY YEARS, BUT HE SEEMS TO GO ON AND ON.
KEELEY

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